

THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA IS FULLY COMMITTED TO RESOLVING PARENTAL/CHILD ABDUCTION CASES

Saudi Arabia deplores the abducting of a child and is committed to resolve child abduction cases involving American parents and American-born children. On September 3, 2002, Prince Saud Al-Faisal, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia, called child abduction and child custody disputes "a human tragedy that should not be politicized. . . Both countries should work closely together to find a practical and workable solution to these tragic cases. These solutions must guarantee parental rights, and more importantly, safeguard the rights of the children, who are the real victims in these cases."

There has been a great deal of confusion and misconception surrounding the issue of child custody and abduction. Some have charged that Saudi Arabia is holding Americans against their will. This is absolutely not true. But there are some who are more eager to make headlines than make progress on this issue. Saudi Arabia is a small player to a much larger global problem. The Kingdom is working diligently to resolve the outstanding cases of child abduction and is working to develop mechanisms to prevent abduction from occurring.

To put this issue into its proper context, the following facts should be kept in mind:

- FACT:** There are approximately 1,100 cases of child abduction involving an American parent and a parent from another country. There are only 11 active cases involving Saudi Arabia, or about 1 percent of the total.
- FACT:** The two most high-profile cases involving Saudi Arabia, Al-Gheshayan and Radwan, have been resolved. The Al-Gheshayan sisters have told the American government and the media that they do not wish to live in the United States and they do not wish to maintain contact with their mother. Amjed Radwan has a valid passport and can leave Saudi Arabia whenever she chooses to do so. While these situations are painful for the parents and the children, there is nothing more that the Saudi government can do.
- FACT:** Saudi Arabia is aggressively pursuing resolutions to the outstanding cases. An internal task force has been formed to seek solutions to these cases. In addition, the Saudi Foreign Minister, Prince Saud Al-Faisal, has proposed the formation of an ad-hoc committee, comprised of representatives of our two governments, to study the potential for a bi-lateral mechanism for dealing with these issues. Saudi Arabia believes an international protocol may help overcome the obstacle of differing legal jurisdictions and make it possible to resolve these cases in a practical manner.

International Parental/Child abduction cases statistics

According to figures provided by the U.S. State Department, at any given time there are more than 1,100 cases of child abduction disputes involving American parents or American born children in the world. At the same time, 300 foreign children reside, abducted by an American parent, in the United States. The House Government Reform Committee website cites that according to the State Department, Saudi Arabia is currently involved in 92 child abduction cases. While Saudi Arabia takes all of these cases seriously, the numbers provided to the public are incorrect. Following a review of the list and consultations with the State Department and members of the House Government Reform Committee, the actual number of cases involving Saudi Arabia is 11.

The U.S. State Department does not formally distribute international Parental/Child abduction cases statistics, but following consultations and intensive research the statistics appear as follows:

- The largest number of child custody and abduction cases involve Mexico and Canada.
- The second largest number of cases involves Western European countries.
- In the Mideast, the largest number of cases involve Jordan, Egypt and Israel.
- In consultation with the State Department and Rep. Dan Burton's staff the actual number of cases in Saudi Arabia is 11.
- Of the 11 cases, the families involved in 5 cases have made requests for no interference by our two governments while the families try to work out matters privately.
- Thus, Saudi Arabia has currently 6 outstanding child abduction cases.
- The Saudi Government is fully committed to resolving these 6 cases and is also available to assist in the 5 other cases currently handled by the families.

Actions taken to solve child abduction cases

The government of Saudi Arabia was startled to learn that the Committee on Government Reform cited 46 recent child custody cases involving as many as 92 children. Representatives of the Embassy of Saudi Arabia consulted with the State Department and learned that the list was not accurate. For instance, 12 of the cases cited had been resolved and closed for years. Following consultation with the State Department, members of the Committee on Government Reform and intensive research by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, it was concluded that the actual number of child cases is 11.

On August 27, 2002, Rep. Dan Burton (R-IA) led a Congressional delegation including Rep. Ben Gilman (R-NY), Rep. Bernard Sanders (IN-VT), Rep. William Delahunt (D-MA), Rep. Mike Rogers (R-MI) and Rep. Brian Kerns (R-IN) to Saudi Arabia to discuss child abduction/custody cases. The delegation was extended the invitation to meet with any of the American children in private so that the children could speak freely and openly.

Prior to departure, the Burton delegation informed the Embassy that it had changed its plans and no longer desired to meet with the Al-Geshayan sisters.

"I have to say these two young ladies are now adults. The determination as to who to contact and assistance from consular officials that they desire rests with them. And so they were able to request a meeting, and we, of course, met with them. My understanding is that Representative Burton had not had anything scheduled or did not plan to meet with the sisters while he was in Saudi Arabia."

Richard Boucher, State Department Spokesperson on September 9, 2002

Action taken in three cases:

Al-Gheshayan sisters

- In an effort to help bring about a resolution to the Al-Gheshayan case, the Saudi government encouraged the sisters, who are now both married and adults, to go to the United States and meet with their mother. But the sisters refused and feared that they would not be allowed to leave the United States. The Saudi government encouraged them to travel to a neutral location to prevent political theatrics or a media circus, and suggested London, and the sisters agreed.
- The sisters traveled freely and of their own volition. In London, they met with a U.S. diplomat who offered them U.S. documents to enter the United States, but the sisters refused. Interviews were arranged with a producer from the Fox News *O'Reilly Factor* and Associated Press journalist Donna Abu-Nasr. During these interviews the sisters stated that they did not want to go to the United States and that they did not want any contact with their mother. One of the sisters was quoted as saying: "If she truly loves us and wants us to be happy, then let her leave us to live in peace with our husbands in Saudi Arabia without any scandals in the newspapers or on television."
- Contrary to statements by Chairman Burton and their mother, they were not accompanied by any Saudi official. There was a media assistant present only during an interview with a media

representative at the request of the sisters to assure that the sisters had a record of the interviews.

Amjad Radwan

- Ms. Radwan was issued a passport when she asked for it, and can travel freely. In a statement to the American Embassy, Ms. Radwan said that she does not wish to travel to the U.S. or elsewhere at this time, but may choose to do so in the future. Both her parents resided in Saudi Arabia.
- Arrangements were also made for a meeting between Ms. Radwan and Rep. Dan Burton. During this meeting Ms. Radwan repeated to Rep. Burton that she has a passport and is free to leave Saudi Arabia at any time, but she does not want to leave right now.
- The Saudi government hopes that Amjad will take the opportunity to come to the United States, and the Saudi government has encouraged her to do so. Statements that the Saudi Government is coercing Ms. Radwan not to travel are false and baseless.

Al-Arifi

- A meeting was arranged with Rep. Brian Kerns (R-IN) and Joanna Stephenson's children. The children are of the ages 12, 11 and 7 and were abducted by her Saudi ex-husband in August 2000.
- Rep. Kerns met with the children and arranged a telephone call between the children and their mother. This case is in the process of being resolved.

"During our mission to Saudi Arabia, the Foreign Minister pledged to work with our government to reach a bilateral agreement and I look forward to continue working with the Saudi government to ensure that no American will be held overseas against their will."

Rep. Benjamin A. Gilman (R-NY), September 9, 2002

Protocol to solve child abduction and custody cases.

The government of Saudi Arabia does not condone child abduction, nor does it hold any of its law-abiding citizens against their will. The cases involving Middle Eastern countries are a minority, and those involving Saudi Arabia represent less than one percent of the total cases worldwide. On September 9, 2002, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal was quoted as saying that a child abduction case was “not a Saudi–American problem....It is not even a government-to-government problem. It is a family problem.”

Most child abduction and child custody cases are amicably resolved either with or without the help of the U.S. Embassy and the Saudi government. There are instances where issues of jurisdiction make it difficult for governments to interfere.

Prince Saud Al-Faisal met with a U.S. Congressional delegation led by Rep. Dan Burton in August 2002. They had a frank discussion about the cases and it is clear the U.S. and Saudi Arabia are at the beginning of building a framework to solve the painful problem of child abduction and custody cases:

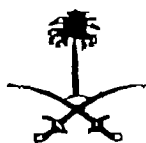
- The Saudi government established a special committee to ascertain the facts and recommend solutions where possible to resolve child custody cases.
- Both parties agreed to come-up with practical and workable solutions to these tragic cases. These solutions must guarantee parental rights while safeguarding the rights of the children.
- The Saudi government has proposed a bilateral protocol with the U.S. to establish a mechanism for dealing with these issues and help overcome the challenges presented by differing legal jurisdictions and make it possible to resolve these cases in a practical manner. Such a protocol would be a first, and could serve as a model for other countries.
- The Saudi government respectfully asks Chairman Burton and the U.S. government to work closely with the Kingdom to create solutions, but also to prevent them from happening in the first place.
- It must be noted that there are a number of cases involving children abducted by their American parent from the Kingdom in violation of court orders. The Saudi government is also seeking solutions to these cases with the help of the U.S. government.

More than 40,000 U.S. citizens live in Saudi Arabia, some second and third generation who have made the Kingdom their home. And, they are not, as some editorials claim, “clamoring to get out”.

“We need a mechanism to help facilitate resolution of such cases....We look forward to working with the United States to establish a protocol in this area...The integrity of the family is very important to our culture. We want to do everything we can to ensure that children have the benefits of a relationship with both parents.”

Adel Al-Jubeir, Foreign Policy Advisor to Crown Prince Abdullah, September 6, 2002

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة الخارجية
مكتب الوزير

SUMMARIES OF CASES RELATING TO SAUDI CITIZENS OF AMERICAN MOTHERS

1. **Yasmin Khalid Al-Shalhub**
Khalid Abdul-Aziz Al-Shalhub daughter Yasmin is believed to have been abducted by her American mother and left the Saudi Arabia through diplomatic assistance on a U.S. military aircraft. All diplomatic and legal channels have been exhausted to return Yasmin to her father in the Kingdom, or to work out visitation rights.
2. **Sami Jalal Moghrab & Yasmin Jalal Moghrab**
Jalal Ali Moghrab's two children were abducted by their American mother to an undisclosed destination. It was discovered later that the children were at the U.S. consulate in Jeddah prior to their departure to the United States. It is believed the children have been transferred to the United States.
3. **Abdul-Aziz Naser Alhjumedi's case of his three abducted children by their American mother is currently a U.S. court. The mother has refusal to allow the father visitation rights in the U.S.**
4. **Khalid Saad Al-Shabrami**
Saad Fahad Al-Shabrami's ex-wife, Jennifer, won a court order allowing her to meet with her son Khalid. Although the father has no objection to the visitation, he wishes that the meeting take place under the supervision of the concerned Saudi authorities, fearing abduction by the mother.

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Number: 97/20/49035
Date: 29/10/1420
(October 9, 1999)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom Saudi Arabia presents its compliment to the Embassy of the United States of America.

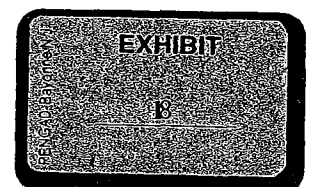
The Ministry would like to draw the attention of the Embassy to the complaint presented by the Saudi citizen/ Khalid Bin Abdulaziz Bin Shalhoob, in which he pointed to that his daughter (Yasmin) was kidnapped at her school door and was transported with the knowledge of the US Embassy in Riyadh to the United States of America by means of a US military aircraft where she was handed to the USAF who then handed her to her mother. This was all done by means of a secret plan known only to the Head of the Mission and to the Counsel General at the American Embassy in the Kingdom.

(Yasmin) daughter of the Saudi citizen who called her father after her arrival in the US immediately related these informations.

While we express our great amazement with this totally refused action by an Embassy of a foreign country with which we share the strongest and closest relations; we denounce this method in dealing with our citizens. Such action boldly violates the diplomatic norms and traditions. We see the only way to return things into their right path is by working diligently to insure prompt return of the Saudi citizen (Yasmin) to her family and country the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Ministry avails itself of this opportunity to renew its highest consideration.

ATTACHMENT 3





تهدي وزارة خارجية المملكة العربية السعودية أطيب تحياتها إلى سفارة الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية بالرياض. وتود الوزارة أن تسترعي انتباه السفارة إلى الشكوى المقدمة من المواطن السعودي/خالد بن عبدالعزيز بن شلهوب والتي أشار فيها إلى تعرض أبنته (ياسمين) للختف عند باب مدرستها وتم نقلها بعلم السفارة الأمريكية في الرياض إلى الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية باستخدام طائرة عسكرية أمريكية حيث جرى تسليمها بعد ذلك إلى القوات الجوية الأمريكية التي سلمتها لوالدتها ، وقد تم ذلك كله من خلال خطة سرية محكمة لا يعلم بها سوى رئيس البعثة والقنصل العام بالسفارة الأمريكية في المملكة.

هذا وقد جرى الإدلاء بهذه المعلومات على لسان ابنة المواطن السعودي (ياسمين) والتي اتصلت بأبيها عقب وصولها للولايات المتحدة الأمريكية مباشرة.

وفي الوقت الذي نعبر فيه عن دهشتنا البالغة لهذا التصرف المرفوض تماما من قبل سفارة دولة أجنبية تربطنا بها أوثق العلاقات وأمتنها ، فإننا لا نملك إلا أن نستنكر هذا الأسلوب في التعامل مع مواطنينا حيث أن ما حصل أمر يدخل في إطار المخالفة الصريحة للأعراف والتقاليد الدبلوماسية. ونرى أن السبيل الوحيد الذي يعيد الأمور إلى نصابها يكمن في العمل بكل الجدية من أجل تأمين الإعادة السريعة للمواطنة السعودية (ياسمين) إلى ذويها وبلادها المملكة العربية السعودية.

وتنتهز الوزارة هذه المناسبة لتعرب للسفارة عن أطيب تمنياتها ،،،



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No. 1371

The Embassy of the United States of America presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and has the honor to refer to the Ministry's Note of 29/10/1420 (October 9, 1999), Number 97/20/49035. The Ministry's note refers to a complaint presented by a Saudi citizen, Mr. Khalid bin Abdulaziz bin Shalhoob, in which he alleges that the American Embassy planned and executed the kidnapping of his daughter, Yasmin Shalhoob, in Riyadh and her subsequent transportation to the United States by a U.S. Air Force aircraft. The father claims that his daughter has given him this account of her removal from Saudi Arabia.

The Embassy has the honor to inform the Ministry that Mr. Shalhoob's allegation of Embassy complicity in the kidnapping of Yasmin Shalhoob is totally false. At no time prior to her disappearance from the Kingdom around April 6, 1999 did Embassy officers, whether in the Consular section or in any other section, have any knowledge of plans to arrange her transportation to the United States. Nor did the Embassy in any way support, assist, or facilitate her removal.

The Embassy wishes to state that it does not approve of illegal, indeed criminal behavior, under any circumstances. It was wrong for Mr. Khalid Shalhoob to kidnap Yasmin from the United States in 1994 in direct violation of an American court order awarding custody

of Yasmin to her mother. If Mr. Shalhoob's account is true, it would also be wrong for Yasmin to have been kidnapped in Riyadh to be brought to the United States.

The Embassy works hard with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to bring parents to cooperate together to resolve the tragic cases of children of dual Saudi and American nationality separated from one parent or the other, but at all times the Embassy and its officers work within the framework of American and Saudi law.

Mr. Shalhoob alleges that a U.S. military aircraft was used to transport his daughter to the United States. The Embassy has the honor to state that very strict regulations apply to the use of such aircraft for personal transportation anywhere in the world. To transport Yasmin Shalhoob would represent a very serious and illegal violation of United States Air Force regulations. Immediately on receipt of the Ministry's Note, the Embassy initiated an investigation by the U.S. Air Force of any misuse of flights between Saudi Arabia and the United States, or to intervening points in Europe, as claimed by Mr. Shalhoob. The results of that investigation will be communicated to the Ministry as soon as they are received.

The Embassy has the honor to state also that Mr. Shalhoob was neither in communication with the Embassy before nor after the transportation of his daughter to the United States. Nonetheless, the Embassy would be pleased to receive any specific information he may have

regarding the flights cited above that would assist our investigation.

The Embassy of the United States of America avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia the assurances of its highest consideration.

Embassy of the United States of America,

Riyadh, October 26, 1999.



APPROVED: AMB [signature]
DRAFTED: i
CLEARED: i

THREATS AND RESPONSES: Saudi Dollars, Russian Oil, Pakistani Mayhem**THE MONEY TRAIL**

Report Says Saudis Fail to Crack Down on Charities That Finance Terrorists

By JEFF GERTH
and JUDITH MILLER

WASHINGTON, Oct. 16 — Al Qaeda's terror network derives most of its financing from charities and individuals in Saudi Arabia, but the kingdom has "turned a blind eye to this problem," according to a new report by experts on terrorist finances.

The report faults the United States for failing to confront the Saudis, saying American government officials have asserted that Saudi Arabia is cooperating on stopping terrorist financing "when they know very well all the ways in which it is not."

The report released today was prepared by a committee sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. Although examples of the misuse of Saudi donations by terrorists have been previously reported, the council's study goes further by concluding for the first time that Saudi Arabia is the single largest

source of terrorist financing.

Moreover, the study's authors warn that the relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia needs to be changed after the attacks of Sept. 11 last year. Previous criticism of Saudi ties to Al Qaeda stemmed largely from the fact that 15 of the 19 hijackers came from the kingdom.

"There's always been a tendency to treat the kingdom with kid gloves because of its economic and strategic importance," said one member of the panel, Stuart E. Eizenstat, a former deputy treasury secretary.

But he said the report aimed to emphasize that "you have to make a fundamental judgment that dealing with terrorist financing is important enough to break with the mold in our relationship."

In one of its starkest conclusions, the report said, "It is worth stating clearly and unambiguously, if only

because official U.S. government spokespersons have not: for years, individuals and charities based in Saudi Arabia have been the most important source of funds for Al Qaeda, and for years Saudi officials have turned a blind eye to this problem."

Rob Nichols, a spokesman for the Treasury Department, said the report was helpful but flawed because it focused too much on the Clinton administration's efforts and did not reflect the "exponential increase in people, agencies and money dedicated to terrorist financing" by the Bush administration.

Mr. Nichols said the administration was "pleased with the cooperation with the Saudis," including their efforts to regulate charities and the designation of two Saudis as supporters of terrorists.

Saudi officials declined to comment on the report's findings. Last

month, Saudi Arabia released a list of actions they said had been taken to combat misuse by terrorists of charitable donations and legitimate transactions.

Those included establishing financial control mechanisms meant to "ensure that terrorist organizations cannot take advantage of these charitable groups in the future."

While praising the Bush administration for blocking assets of some charitable organizations since the Sept. 11 attacks, the report from the Council on Foreign Relations concluded that there was much work to be done in shutting down the financing of terror groups.

The report contains dozens of organizational and policy recommendations for the United States and other countries.

The first strategic recommendation calls on the United States to "speak out bluntly, forcefully and openly" about failures by foreign

countries to combat terrorism. Past lack of candor, the report said, is a crucial part of the problem.

The chairman of the nonpartisan committee is Maurice R. Greenberg, chairman and chief executive of the American International Group, a leading financial conglomerate.

Other members include former and current government officials like William H. Webster, former director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Central Intelligence Agency; David Cohen, deputy commissioner for intelligence of the New York City Police Department; and William F. Wechsler, former director for transnational threats at the National Security Council.

The report said tracing terrorist financing was complicated by a basic tenet of Islam known as zakat, which requires every Muslim to give a small percentage of his wealth each year to charitable causes like hospitals, mosques and schools. Be-

cause it is the world's richest Muslim nation, Saudi Arabia is the largest backer of Islamic charities.

But the report maintains that the "widely unregulated, seldom audited and generally undocumented practices have allowed unscrupulous actors such as Al Qaeda to access huge sums of money over the years."

In 1999 and 2000, officials of the Clinton administration, including some who worked on the council's report, went to Saudi Arabia to raise the subject of charitable donations. But the issue never became a priority at the top levels of government, according to Mr. Eizenstat and other former officials.

In 1999, Saudi Arabia tightened its money laundering laws to bring it into compliance with international standards, but according to the report, the changes "have not been implemented."

The Washington Post

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

Osama's Gold

WHEN THE PENTAGON wanted an attack-proof communications network, it designed the Internet. The Net's key defense mechanism was "redundancy": There would be several paths connecting the sender of a message to its recipient, so an attack on one or two paths wouldn't disrupt the message flow. Unfortunately, the Pentagon is not alone in grasping this principle; al Qaeda's financial network is based on redundancy also. The terrorists move money around through the Western banking system, the Islamic banking system and the traditional hawala system; they pack cash into suitcases and haul gold over mountain passes and traffic in diamonds. This complex network, connected to a diversity of money sources, has given al Qaeda the resilience to survive successive expulsions from Sudan and Afghanistan. Rather than depending on the largess of state sponsors, al Qaeda is rich enough to turn the tables: It is a sponsor of states.

In the wake of 9/11, President Bush resolved to go after al Qaeda's money network. "We will starve the terrorists of funding," Mr. Bush declared. The administration has since designated 241 individuals and organizations as "terrorist" and frozen \$112 million in assets belonging to these groups. It has enlisted the support of allies; the Treasury says that 166 nations have taken action against terrorist accounts. The administration has even sent four dozen teams of advisers to countries that lack the legal framework or technical competence necessary to locate and freeze al Qaeda's cash.

One year into this commendable effort, a Council on Foreign Relations task force has re-

ported that the administration could do more. It suggests that the administration make use of the enhanced power, created by last year's USA Patriot Act, to go after suspect accounts abroad. Before the act's passage, the administration was required to designate a bank for terrorist connections, a drastic step that's often hard to justify without compromising intelligence sources. The Patriot Act allows the Treasury to nail probable terrorist financiers for the more easily proven offense of complicity in money laundering. But the administration has yet to use this option. Now that it has announced most of the terrorist designations that it can justify, it must be prepared to move into a new phase of targeting suspect institutions under the Patriot provision.

The task force also recommends that the administration give its financial offensive a higher profile, perhaps by creating a terror-finance czar in the White House. Whether or not yet another czar is desirable, it's true that governments such as Saudi Arabia's won't do what's needed to clamp down on terrorist money unless they feel that no less a person than the president is demanding it of them. So far, Mr. Bush has shrunk from publicly denouncing the Saudi monarchy for tolerating money flows to al Qaeda, even though the kingdom remains al Qaeda's biggest source of funds. No doubt this is because Saudi cooperation is needed on other issues, from the Iraq war to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. Yet Mr. Bush has shown that you can talk tough to the Russians on missile defense while still cooperating with them on other issues. There is no reason the Saudis should be spared a similar approach.